

Japan America Society of Minnesota



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The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota

May 2023 Vol. 32, No. 5 revised

Recap: Corporate Roundtable with the Metropolitan Airports Commission



Naomi Pesky, the Vice President of Strategy – Stakeholder Engagement for the MAC

On April 13, 2023, the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) hosted our first live and in-person Corporate Roundtable event since the beginning of the pandemic. The MAC welcomed members of JASM to the MSP airport conference center with a breakfast of onigiri and soufflé pancakes that delighted attendees. Naomi Pesky, Vice President of Strategy – Stakeholder Engagement for the MAC presented on and hosted a discussion regarding MAC operations from past, present, and future; how the MAC navigated the pandemic; and how it has positioned itself to emerge from the pandemic successfully. JASM members were then welcomed on a tour of the airside operations center and baggage handling area at MSP.

The MAC is a Minnesota state government organization that owns and operates MSP and six reliever airports in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. MSP has an important role in the historical ties between Japan and Minnesota as the airport that in 1947 hosted the first international passenger flights to and from Haneda. It's a fine legacy that continues to this day.



A breakfast of onigiri and soufflé pancakes



The MAC has focused on providing exceptional airport experiences so that Minnesota thrives. These efforts have been recognized, and resulted in MSP receiving several awards for being the leading airport in passenger satisfaction. MSP was recently named the Best Airport in America for passenger service and operations by the Airports Council International, an honor which MSP has won 6 of the past 7 years. (It must be said that due to the pandemic MSP did not participate in the year it did not win!)



.... continues on page 3

Upcoming: New Member Social 2023 Welcome New JASM Members! (In-Person)



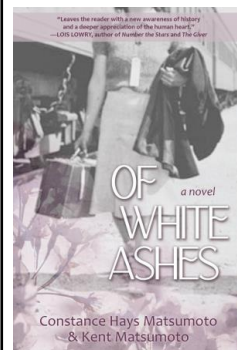
New members from 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 are invited and will receive the invitation via email.

Please join us for our *New Member Social 2023* on **May 11th, 6:00 - 7:30 pm (CT)**. We are excited to share that the social is **IN-PERSON** at *Upsher-Smith/Sawai Pharmaceutical* in *Maple Grove*, one of our corporate members, this year!

This event will help you get to know JASM a little bit better and become acquainted with other Japan enthusiasts in Minnesota and the surrounding area.

Register today! This is a free event for our new members. We are looking forward to seeing you in person this year!

Upcoming: Meet the Authors: Constance Hays Matsumoto & Kent Matsumoto, co-authors of *Of White Ashes*



Join JASM on **Thursday, May 25th at 6:00 pm (CT)** on Zoom for a live discussion and Q&A with authors Constance Hays Matsumoto and Kent Matsumoto as they discuss their newly released book, *Of White Ashes*.

This event is supported and moderated by the Twin Cities Japanese American Citizens League (JACL).

Please register today!
\$8 for Non-Member,
Free for Member

Tickets are non-refundable, but they are transferable.

Of White Ashes

The bombing of Pearl Harbor propels America into WWII and two Japanese Americans into chaos.

.... continues on page 3.



Message from Executive Director: Rio Saito



Hello, friends and family of JASM. Sakura season is already over in Japan, but we are just starting to see spring in Minnesota. I am looking forward to having green all around us, but I'm not looking forward to allergy season so much.

Although we are working towards having in-person events as the standard again, this year for the first time we

renewed the structure and launched a new style of J-Quiz. As you may have read in the last Tsushin, we opened the event to everyone who is interested in Japan and has been learning about Japan, to test their knowledge. We had participants from many cities in Minnesota and from Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Iowa. What we did not anticipate was that after the trivia quiz was over, the participants stayed online, and they connected with each other discussing how they are learning Japanese. We were so happy to be able to see people who live far away from each other connect through JASM's event and through the love of Japanese language and culture.

Another exciting event was bringing back the corporate roundtable in person. On April 13th, The Metropolitan Airports Commission hosted us at their great conference room with a beautiful breakfast spread. They shared the story of the airport -- not only the history, but also their struggles through the pandemic and during the gradual recovery. They recently brought back direct flights to Haneda-Tokyo as well. It is such wonderful news for us to know that Tokyo feels a little bit closer again. The Minneapolis Saint Paul International Airport famously includes Japanese language on directional signs. It means so much to all Japanese travelers to see our language welcoming us at the airport. We would like to thank the Metropolitan Airports Commission for their efforts to continue the connections between Minnesota and Japan.

In March, we also hosted an online lecture by a renowned Japanese ceramic artist, Hitomi Hosono, who resides in London. Hosono's artwork was recently on display at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum (MMAM) in Winona. After the lecture, I visited the museum in Winona to see the artwork in person, and I was blown away by how beautiful and powerful those pieces were -- and also how great the museum itself is! Minnesota has such a thriving arts community. Art is one of the strongest ways to connect people from different cultures, and we are very happy to have many institutions in Minnesota like MMAM that appreciate Japanese art.

In Japan, April is the beginning of the year in many institutions. Schools start in April, and many companies' fiscal year starts in April with sakura blooming everywhere. I think we at JASM already had a great "first month of the year." I hope to see you all at the various events in person and online, to continue building our community together.

Rio Saito, JASM Executive Director

Ad: Japanese Treasures Garage Sale!

Japanese Treasures Garage Sale!



Decades' worth of a family's collection

WHAT: Kitchenware, Kimono, Linens, Books, Fans, Origami, & more...

WHEN: June 9-10 FRI-SAT 9am to 3pm

**WHERE: Alley of 1685 Hillcrest Ave, St Paul
(first alley south of Ford Parkway)**

CASH ONLY



Membership News (3/21 – 4/20, 2023)

Thanks to the following new JASM members:

Tracy Esid, Jennifer Inafuku, Micah Lindstrom,
Alan Peterson, Jessany Rose

Thanks to the following renewing JASM members:

Clinton Conner, Daniel Dulas, Janelle Erickson,
Thomas Greenwalt, Karen Harwerth,
Asako Hirabayashi, Bekah Lindstrom,
Magara Maeda, Jeff Newton, Vinh Phung,
Corin and Nell Wirth

Recap: Corporate Roundtable with the Metropolitan Airports Commission *continues...*



MSP was also named by JD Power as the highest rated airport in passenger satisfaction by passengers in the “mega airport” category, receiving a higher rating than airports such as Detroit, San Francisco, and JFK in New York. The airport brings significant positive financial impact to Minnesota, including the value it provides through economic growth, job creation, and tourism.

While the economic recovery from the pandemic is continuing for our society, a quarter of pre-pandemic flights have yet to return to service. Internationally, less than two-thirds of flights have returned thus far. Flights from the Asia-Pacific region continue to lag, as only half of pre-pandemic flights to and from the region have returned to MSP. The MAC is optimistic about the recovery of flights, but notes that flights to the Asian-Pacific region may take some time to recover. The historic connection between MSP and Haneda was resumed only in March, with JASM’s Executive Director Rio Saito in attendance for the inauguration of the resumption of the flight.



Jack Koepke, JASM board member

Upcoming: Meet the Authors: Constance Hays Matsumoto & Kent Matsumoto, *Of White Ashes* co-authors *continues...*

Separated by the Pacific, each embarks on a tumultuous path to survive childhood and live the American dream.

Ruby Ishimaru loses her liberty and uproots from her Hawaii home to incarceration camps on the mainland. Koji Matsuo strains under the menacing clouds of the Japanese war machine and atomic bombing while concealing a dangerous secret—one that threatens his family’s safety.

When destiny brings Ruby and Koji together in California, their chemistry is magnetic, but wounds of trauma run deep and threaten their love as another casualty of war. Inspired by the true stories of the authors’ family, *Of White Ashes* crosses oceans and cultures, illuminating the remarkable lives of ordinary people who endure seemingly unbearable hardship with dignity and patience. Their experiences compel us to reflect on the resilience of humanity and the risk of history repeating itself.



Constance Hays Matsumoto (Connie) resides in Greenville, Delaware with her husband, Kent. She is a former corporate and interior design devotee who later embraced the art and rigor of creative writing. Inspired by Shakespeare’s “What’s past is prologue,” Connie writes stories and poetry intended to influence positive change in our world. Connie earned her B.A. from Notre Dame of Maryland University and an M.S. in Business from Johns Hopkins University. She is a member of the Authors Guild, Eastern Shore Writers’ Association, Historical Novel Society, the Women’s National Book Association, and has served on the Board of Directors of the Maryland Writers’ Association as

Communications Chair and as President of the Baltimore Chapter.



Kent Matsumoto, a third-generation Japanese American, was born in Virginia and spent his formative years living in Japan where he attended the American School. He earned his degrees from the University of Virginia and University of Michigan Law School and has worked in law firms and private and public companies. He currently serves on the boards of a publicly traded community bank and the non-profit Head Start Washington County (Maryland). He has authored articles for professional publications and spoken before numerous professional organizations.

*Please thank our members
with your support!*

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Twin Cities Aikido Center
UMN Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
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Sakura Circle Membership

Sam and Mirja Hanson
Noriko Ishida
Ron and Molly Leonhardt
Bob and Hisayo Luck
John and Hiroko Shade

Recap: Live from London, Artist Talk: Flora Inspired Ceramics of Hitomi Hosono



Hitomi Hosono, ceramic artist

MMAM
MINNESOTA MARINE
ART MUSEUM

On March 30th, 2023, JASM was joined by talented ceramic artist Hitomi Hosono, whose work has been featured throughout the world and is currently on display at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum. During this exciting online event, Hitomi-san shared the history, process, and inspiration for her work, which draws heavily on nature and her childhood memories of growing up in Japan, surrounded by rice paddies and the traditional arts.

To open the event our friends from the Minnesota Marine Art Museum (MMAM) shared a few words about their history and mission, and expressed their appreciation and enthusiasm about featuring Hitomi-san's work, which has been among their most popular exhibitions to date. Her work was featured through April 30, and we encouraged the participants to visit. Visitors could also receive a discount to the exhibition by presenting their registration to this event.



Hitomi Hosono shares her process of detailing the sprigs which are applied directly to the formed vessel

Hitomi-san, now based out of London, UK, speaks fondly of her upbringing and the importance placed on the traditional arts. Her grandfather, whom Hitomi-san describes as a

significant influence on her work, was a skilled ceramist who could achieve meticulous accuracy using simple tools (this would later carry through to Hitomi-san's use of simple dentist tools to create the finite detail in her work). It was during her high school years that Hitomi-san started to seriously engage in creative work and expression, and in college, she experimented with manga-inspired drawings and began to fuse her sketches with ceramics using an overglaze painting technique. After graduating, Hitomi-san relocated to the UK, and there found inspiration in the way plants were used to decorate everything from architecture to bridges to picture frames, and she was moved by the way they would organically change forms.

Taking these new observations as inspiration, Hitomi-san began experimenting with *sprigging* while attending the Royal College of Art and during her artist residency. Sprigging is a technique where molded shapes and pieces are applied to an artifact or vessel prior to firing and when applied, take on a three-dimensional form and impart a sense of flow and movement. Some of Hitomi-san's pieces include more than 1,000 individually applied leaf sprigs, and her larger pieces can take up to one year to dry!

... continues on page 6.

The 37th Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest



From left: Ayaan Said, May Vang, Aishi Wang

On Saturday March 25th the Thirty-Seventh Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest was held at the Consulate-General of Japan's residence in Chicago.

A rehearsal was held on Wednesday March 22nd at the University of Minnesota. The rehearsal was attended by students, members of the Japanese Program,

and Rio Saito, JASM's Executive Director.

The three students participating were Ayaan Said, May Vang, and Aishi Wang, who are currently taking third year Japanese.

All three students gave a fine performance. Said won the coveted 1st Place Prize with her speech *My Unforgettable First Trip Abroad*. Vang took 3rd with her speech *How Learning a Foreign Language Changed My Life*, and Wang received the JIC (Japan Information Center) Award for her speech *The World and Him in My Eyes*.

In her speech, Said described how despite an "immediate no" from her mother she persisted in traveling to Japan with her friend just out of high school. "I had no idea how vast the world was until I went to Japan," she writes in her speech. "I entered the stage feeling very nervous," she confides, reflecting on the contest, "but I walked out of it standing up taller and prouder."

In her speech, Vang eloquently describes her journey learning French, from enjoying French in college to the thrill of communicating with French with her French-speaking relatives, and finally to the challenge of moving to France and speaking French "to survive." "Failure and embarrassing moments will happen," she states in her speech, "but what matters most is one's attitude toward learning." Of the trip to Chicago she said, "I never imagined I'd have this kind of learning opportunity."

Being mocked repeatedly by a mean English teacher in high school, Wang came to hate language study. But a gift of a "little fluffy hamster" and the words "Don't take it so hard, let's show this hamster the beautiful world together," roused her from her sadness. Later, surrounded by supportive teachers and peers at the University of Minnesota, she was inspired to become a warm person and help others. "This short trip to Chicago has left me with memories that will last a lifetime," Wang reflected.

Congratulations to all of the contestants. In a field of thirteen experienced speakers from Midwest universities who had already passed a preliminary round, our Minnesota students made a very strong showing and did us proud.

Marnie K. Jorenby, Lecturer, University of Minnesota

North Dakota News: NDSU Japan Club hosted Miso Night on April 13th



Cooked soybeans



Peeling beans together

Cooked soybeans, salt, and moldy rice; things that many would question as food products. And yet, with these scant few ingredients comes the most emblematic flavor in Japanese cooking: miso paste, made the old-fashioned way. In Fargo, North Dakota, the NDSU Japan club and several community members met for a lesson in how this indispensable ingredient is made. Club member Steven Westra (who is a Ph.D. grad student in the Materials & Nanotech program) explained the simple but exact steps for miso preparation:



More preparations



Left to right: Steven's 5-year-old miso, 3-month-old miso, and our new batch (5-year-old miso)

Prepare beans by soaking overnight before cooking. Cook beans and then remove loose skins. Combine with appropriate amount of koji and salt. After firmly packing into a clean jar, cover the top with a layer of extra salt to prevent mold. The longest step in the miso making process is the last. Set it aside to ferment for between 6 months (for shiro miso) to over one year (for aka miso).

Besides miso making, we had a chance to eat *zenzai* (red bean paste soup with mochi). The anko (red bean paste) was made from scratch by Steven. And Sakurako, the president of NDSU Japan Club, made soup and mochi to go with it.

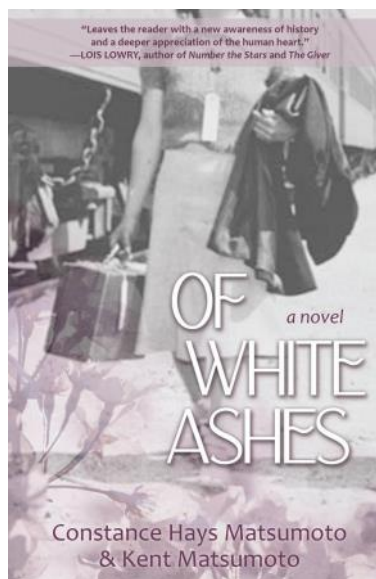
Even though it is easy to buy miso and anko at supermarkets, learning the process of making miso and red bean paste from scratch is important for understanding Japanese traditions. When it is hard to find these products or if they are very expensive to buy, making your own is fun!

Steven Westra (member of Japan Club) and Aiko Hatano (JASM Program Assistant)



NDSU Japan Club, Mayville students, and community members. Not all participants are shown in photo.

Tom Haeg's Book Review



Of White Ashes; Constance and Kent Matsumoto, Apprentice House Press, 2023.

"This book is a work of fiction..." but the storyline and characters are true: welcome to historical fiction. We follow the lives of two lovers: one from Hawaii (Ruby Ishimaru) and the other from Hiroshima (Koji Matsuo) - as they and others similarly situated struggle and suffer through the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' while achieving a gist of *gaman*. The fortunes - rather, the

misfortunes -- are omnipresent: forced relocations, incarceration camps, the Japanese war machine, the atom bomb and more, all while the couple draws succor from *shikata ga nai* for bliss. It's war and it's ugly, yet it must be told.

The cleverness of the narrative lies in revealing on a micro level how an individual's indignities are affected by macro themes: what they actually endure during war which isn't told in history books (for example, one's privacy shame in an internment camp just to go to the bathroom, or anxieties surrounding conscription into the Imperial Army).

While the authors claim historical accuracy (see the acknowledgements), the abbreviated account of the Pearl Harbor attack warrants an asterisk. They summarily state that "... 2,400 American civilians and military personnel died." Actually, only 68 civilians died, and this was mainly due to friendly fire shelling in Honolulu, or about half the number of Japanese who died that day. Secondly, "Hardly a single U.S. vessel escaped destruction." The U.S. only permanently lost two ships, the USS Arizona and the USS Oklahoma. All other ships were repaired and afloat within six months, all three U.S. aircraft carriers escaped any damage whatsoever since they were on maneuvers, and not one U.S. submarine was hit, whereas five Japanese mini-submarines were sunk.

Of White Ashes is well written with delightful prose. There's even a Japanese word glossary: a nice touch. The chapter-by-chapter chronological progression makes it easy to follow. And it's thought provoking, too; when I put it down I found myself saying "You know, I didn't think about that." Anyone with Japanese heritage will gain a heightened appreciation of what their elders experienced during those turbulent times. Others assuredly will acquire a deeper empathy for all those afflicted by war.

The Twin Cities Japanese American Citizens League is co-hosting a Webinar event on Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 6:00 pm CDT: "Meet the Authors: Constance Hays and Kent Matsumoto." See page 1 for details.

Tom Haeg

Nonstop to Tokyo



My wife Sahya and I spent the entire winter in Japan. Or so we thought. After returning to Minnesota on April 3rd, we have had to endure one snowstorm, and, as I write this note, it is threatening to snow again. Sahya is threatening to fly back to Japan until we get more civilized weather, say, around Memorial Day.

If she does fly back to Japan, she will be able to fly nonstop from Minneapolis to Haneda! We are fortunate here in the Twin Cities to host a major Delta hub and a thriving Japan-related business community which makes regular nonstop service possible. Chat GPT told me that there has been a nonstop flight between Minneapolis and Tokyo since 2009, but when I clicked on the link it gave me, I got the message “Error 404, The page you are looking for was not found”. Oops. Let’s just say there has been nonstop service for a long time!

What I can say (and this was verified by a human) is that Delta moved its nonstop service from Narita to Haneda in 2016, which made things even better—Haneda is a lovely modern airport, and you can take the train to downtown Tokyo in about 30 minutes, versus the hour-plus ride from Narita.

I took the nonstop service for granted—until it stopped. During the pandemic, Delta was forced to make drastic cuts to its international services, and the MSP-HND route was one of the casualties. Flying to Chicago, Detroit, or Atlanta only to turn around and fly the other direction to Tokyo is not the best way to get an overseas trip started! So it was with great relief that I learned last month that Delta would be restarting its nonstop service. Service started on March 25th; our Executive Director Rio Saito made a cameo appearance on the local news to talk about the importance of this flight to the Japan community in Minnesota.

Sahya is already making plans to escape to Japan for the 2023-24 winter. I’ll be voting that we start our trip with a nonstop flight from Minneapolis to Haneda.

Bob Luck
JASM President



Recap: Live from London, Artist Talk: Flora Inspired Ceramics of Hitomi Hosono *continues...*



Completed works of Hitomi Hosono using the sprigging technique

She meticulously controls the moisture during the drying process by either spraying pieces with water as they are drying or incorporating a small pool of water in the drying box to prevent her pieces from cracking.

Hitomi-san attributes her current inspiration to her walks in nature and a curiosity about the flora that surround her, and she relies heavily on her senses when creating her art. She will often use her sense of touch to learn more about the thickness and textures of flora to inform her creative process. Nature remains the primary theme in Hitomi-san’s work, which takes on an inherently natural aesthetic. Part of this achieved by using an unglazed finish. Her pieces, which currently primarily consist of decorative vessels, offer a sense of wonder, patience, and incredible attention to detail, and it is clear to see why her art is so honored throughout the world.

JASM would like to thank Hitomi-san for her generosity in speaking with us about her incredible art, and the attendees of the event for supporting her work and the organization.

Crystal Neff, JASM program volunteer



The participants of this event



Rio Saito, JASM executive director and Yoko Ueno, JASM program manager visit the exhibition at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum (MMAM) in Winona.

Left: from left to right: Dave Casey, Associate Curator of Exhibitions & Engagement; Heather Casper, Curator of Education at MMAM; Yoko Ueno; and Rio Saito. Right: MMAM building

領事出張サービスのお知らせ (ミネソタ州ブルーミントン市)

当館は、6月4日(日曜日)にミネソタ州ブルーミントン市での領事出張サービスを実施する予定です。皆様、是非この機会にご利用ください。領事出張サービスでは基本的にパスポートの交付及び各種証明書の交付のみとなりますが、その他のご相談も受け付けております。ただし、利用をご希望の方は必ず事前に予約をお願いいたします。なお、予約のない場合には、入場をお断りすることがございますので、あらかじめご了承ください。詳細は下記のURLをご参照ください。

<https://www.chicago.us.emb-japan.go.jp/files/100491783.pdf>

当館連絡先

Tel: (312) 280-0400 (24 時間対応) (注)

Fax: (312) 280-9568

Email: ryoji1@cg.mofa.go.jp

Japan America Society of Minnesota

- Membership Application ○ Change of Address
- Membership Renewal ○ Tax-deductible Donation

Name _____

Name (2nd adult of a household membership) _____

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City _____

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I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of _____

Amount Enclosed: _____
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Japan America Society of Minnesota
P.O. Box 26639, Minneapolis, MN 55426

Individual Membership

Sakura Circle Membership \$1,200+
Individual\$50
Student\$30
Household\$75
(2 adults plus children under 18)

JASM May Event Calendar

May 11: New Member Social 2023

Welcome New JASM Members! (In-Person)

May 25: Meet the Authors: Constance Hays Matsumoto & Kent Matsumoto, co-authors of "Of White Ashes" (Online)

Become a JASM Member

Support our mission and become a member!

1. Go to mn-japan.org
 2. At the top, hover over 'Support' then click on 'Join'
 3. Select your membership type and read the benefits and instructions.
- You can also become a member using your smartphone.

Save the Date for the 2023 JASM Charity Golf Scramble



JASM will be holding our 3rd annual charity golf scramble event on **Saturday, September 23** at **Pioneer Creek Golf Course** in Maple Plain, MN.

Enjoy a fun day of competition with friends while supporting JASM. This event is limited to 72 participants. Look for registration details in upcoming Tsushins and in emails.

For further information, please contact:

Tom Haeg, 612-940-3351 tomhaeg@msn.com

Marc Blehert, 763-280-2108 mblehert@yahoo.com



2022 JASM Charity Golf Scramble participants





J | A | S | M

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of MINNESOTA

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通信

May Tsūshin
2023

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to jasm@mn-japan.com

April Event



*Recap: Corporate Roundtable with the
Metropolitan Airports Commission*

*Recap: Live from London,
Artist Talk: Flora Inspired
Ceramics of Hitomi Hosono*